PSYCHE.

MUSCA DOMESTICA LINN. VERSUS VESPA OCCIDENTALIS CRESSON.

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During the collecting expeditions of his summer vacations the writer has had frequent occasions to note the misleading nature of the vernacular name of the common house-fly. It was at first a matter of surprise to find that wherever our camp was made—whether on the broad plains of western Kansas, many miles from the nearest human abode, or in some secluded cañon of the Rocky mountains but rarely visited by hunters and tourists—the locality was already occupied in full force by this insect so commonly supposed to be exclusively found in and around the permanent dwellings of the human race. In such uninhabited localities the tents would be pitched but a few hours before they would become disagreeably filled with flies, all of which, with the exception of an occasional *Stomoxys*, were unmistakably *Musca domestica* Linn.

While camping in Santa Fé cañon, N. Mexico, in August, 1880, this plague of flies seemed about to be unusually formidable. On the very first night the lower surfaces of the roofs and ridge-poles of the tents were fairly blackened by the immense multitudes of dipterous pests. The next morning it was observed, somewhat to the alarm of the women and children of the party, that large numbers of so-called yellow-jackets

(*Vespa occidentalis* Cr.) were entering the tents. For some time it was supposed that the object of the new comers was to forage for sugar and other camp supplies. But before night it was noticed that the numbers of flies in the tents had been perceptibly reduced, and on the second morning it was discovered that the wasps were intent on the acceptable task of removing our troublesome guests. There were generally as many as forty or fifty wasps in each tent at once, and each wasp was observed on leaving the tent to be carrying out the body of a fly, not for burial nor as food for its captors, but for storage in the nests of the wasps and undoubtedly as food for their young. Each captured fly, before removal from the tents, was deprived of its wings and legs, and on several mornings we were awakened from our slumbers by these severed members dropping upon our faces. The wasps were unremitting in their labors from daylight to dusk, and in four or five days the flies had ceased to be troublesome by their numbers, the wasps having gained upon them so as to dispose of them almost as rapidly as they entered the tents. Occasionally a specimen of *Vespa maculata* Linn. was observed cooperating with *V. occidentalis* Cr. in the removal of the flies.